

Written Testimony Submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly Housing Committee in support of SB4, *An Act Concerning Connecticut's Present and Future Housing Needs*.

February 21, 2023

Dear Representative Luxenberg, Senator Moore, and members of the Housing Committee:

My name is Rev. Larissa Forsythe. I live in Glastonbury, Connecticut, and am the Associate Minister of the Congregational Church in South Glastonbury, a founding member of Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA), a broad-based organization of 49 faith institutions working together on this issue. I am writing in support of a rent cap and in support of SB4, with changes to better protect tenants.

Protecting people who rent is not only the right thing to do, it's the smart thing to do! So many of the massive increases in rent in our state over the last couple of years have been instigated by out-of-state investors and owners. This not only hurt people who rent, but it also weakens our state.

After years of decline, Hartford's rate of homelessness jumped 13% in 2022. This is largely driven by skyrocketing rent and an increase in evictions. Every \$100 increase in rent results in a 9% increase in homelessness. This is unconscionable.

As a renter myself, I have seen the effects of even a modest increase in rent. Our landlord raised our rent by 10% this year. It created a budget crunch and a great deal of stress. While we are in no danger of homelessness (yet), being at the whim of a landlord creates a constant state of worry. Will we be able to afford another increase? Will we have to find another place? Can we even afford to live in the town I minister in? Additionally, being saddled with higher rent makes our dream of owning a home that much further away. If we knew our rent could only go up a maximum of 3% a year, it would make a huge difference in helping us feel secure and stable in our neighborhood. Stable neighborhoods are good neighborhoods.

If rent stabilization would help my middle-class family, imagine how much more it will help families who struggle with poverty. It could create a sense of security for people who are struggling in every aspect of their lives. No

one should have to live with the feeling that they could lose their home at any moment. Especially when the solution is so simple.

I am in support of a rent cap and SB 4, and, in particular, the portion on rent caps with amendments to better protect tenants.

- A rent cap of no more than 3%
- Coverage in between tenants, so landlords can't push out tenants to increase rent
- Expand good cause eviction protections so tenants have security in their homes and can't be evicted for no reason.

Thank you for your leadership in this crucial issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lucius D. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lucius" and last name "Smith" clearly distinguishable.

Rev. Larissa Forsythe,
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Glastonbury, CT 06033